



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2023

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/23/3329581

12 South Drive, Ruislip, Hillingdon, HA4 8EX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Adam McIntosh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 13950/APP/2023/1819, dated 22 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new boundary wall facing Croft Gardens.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was made retrospectively and at the time of my visit I saw that a cream coloured, rendered wall had been constructed along part of the appeal site's return boundary to the back edge of the pavement of Croft Gardens.
3. The development that has been carried out differs from that which has been applied for, and as shown on the planning application Drg No P/MAC/2023/003, which includes drawings entitled '*Current Front Elevation (Facing Croft Gardens)*' and '*Current Side Elevation (Facing South Drive)*'. The application drawing shows a 1900mm high new boundary enclosure of uniform height comprising mostly a rendered wall but with three close-boarded insert panels at one end.
4. The wall as constructed at the time of my visit was not of a uniform height. It had a total of eleven columns at regular intervals along its length standing, by my estimate, around 200mm proud. These all had a pair of cables emerging from their top surfaces. The lower section of wall nearest South Drive had no insert panels but the three columns at this end stood equivalent in height to the others.
5. The application drawings clearly do not show the current situation on site. Furthermore, I cannot be certain that the development that has been carried out is complete. I have therefore considered the appeal based upon an assessment of a 'proposed' development as shown on the plans, rather than what has actually been built.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed wall upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal property is a two-storey, detached property within a suburban, residential area and within the Council's Midcroft, Ruislip Area of Special Local Character (ASLC); an area defined within the Hillingdon Local Plan - Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) (HLP Part 2) as a non-designated local heritage asset with a character and identity which local residents value and which the Council wishes to preserve or enhance. No 12 occupies a corner plot at the junction where Croft Gardens meets South Drive. The dwelling's front entrance faces Croft Gardens, with an open plan frontage to South Drive. I have been provided with no detailed information to show the boundary treatment prior to the erection of the existing wall along part of the return boundary to Croft Gardens, although the Council has described it as a '*low brick wall which curved upwards meeting a high brick wall, and then a stretch of garden fencing*'. The appellants describe the pre-existing wall section of the boundary as being '*set at a lower height immediately at the entrance porch to the host dwelling*'.
8. From my observations on site, the majority part of the proposed wall at a height of 1900mm and where it would enclose the rear and private garden to No 12, would be of an appropriately residential height, scale and function, reflective of others in the locality in terms of height and length where rear gardens to corner properties are enclosed along their return boundaries. It would also reflect my best understanding of the scale of enclosure which pre-existed along this stretch. I do not find the use of a rendered wall in place of a timber fence to be intrusive or out of keeping.
9. Nevertheless, the scale of the proposed enclosure where it extends nearest to South Drive would screen from view the front entrance porch to the house. In contrast, the frontages to dwellings along South Drive and Croft Gardens within the immediate locality are generally bound by either low brick walls or vegetation, or in some cases a combination of both, resulting in a soft transition between the public and private domain within the street scene. The height and form of the proposed enclosure along this stretch would represent a distinct shift away from the openness that largely defines the frontages of dwellings within the area and would appear incongruous and out of keeping in its setting.
10. My impression is that, due to the height of the proposed enclosure overall, the proposal would fail to harmonise with the street scene and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. My findings are reinforced by the development which has taken place, which I find to be unsympathetic where it encloses the distinctive corner setting of No 12 and its side entrance. As such, there would be conflict with the strategic aims of Policies HE1 and BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) as far as between them they seek to ensure that the character and appearance of ASLC's is, as a minimum, conserved and that the quality of the built environment is maintained. For the same reasons there would be conflict with the similar requirements of HLP Part 2 Policies DMHB5, DMHB11 and DMHD1 as far as they

relate to an ASLC, the design quality of new development, and the design, materials, and height of any front boundary.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I find the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The harm that I have identified and conflict with development plan policy means that the proposal would not represent a sustainable form of development. The National Planning Policy Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore does not apply. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR